

**METHOD, APPARATUS, AND PROGRAM FOR ENHANCING THE
VISIBILITY OF DOCUMENTS**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field:

5 The present invention relates to data processing and, in particular, to document presentation. Still more particularly, the present invention provides a method, apparatus, and program for enhancing the visibility of documents.

10 **2. Description of Related Art:**

The worldwide network of computers commonly known as the "Internet" has seen explosive growth in the last several years. Mainly, this growth has been fueled by the introduction and widespread use of so-called "Web browsers," which enable simple graphical user
15 interface-based access to network servers, which support documents formatted as so-called "Web pages." These Web pages are versatile and customized by authors. For example, Web pages may mix text and graphic images. A
20 web page also may include fonts of varying sizes and colors.

A browser is a program that is executed on a graphical user interface (GUI). The browser allows a user to seamlessly load documents from the Internet and
25 display them by means of the GUI. These documents are commonly formatted using markup language protocols, such as hypertext markup language (HTML). Portions of text and images within a document are delimited by indicators, which affect the format for display. In HTML documents,

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the indicators are referred to as tags. The browser gives some means of viewing the contents of web pages (or nodes) and of navigating from one web page to another.

The versatility and customization of web pages, however, is sometimes an impediment to users displaying the documents. For example, documents, such as HTML documents, may allow the author to include a background image or color to be presented behind the document content. However, some authors choose backgrounds and colors that make the text blend into the background. Thus, when the document is presented on a display, the text may be difficult to read.

Some document viewers allow the user to define preferences for attributes of a document. For example, a user may be allowed to set a font typeface or size to define default attributes for documents that are displayed. These preferences may be used to enhance the visibility and readability of text. However, when attributes are explicitly specified, the explicit attributes in the document cannot be overridden. Thus, if the explicitly specified attributes render the document difficult to read, the user is helpless to change them.

Therefore, it would be advantageous to provide an improved document viewer that enhances the visibility of documents.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a document viewer with a clarification tool. The document viewer may be a Web browser and the clarification tool may be a plugin or extension. The clarification tool modifies the attributes of the document to make the text more visible. The manner in which the document attributes are modified may be defined in user preferences. For example, the user may choose to modify the color of the text to a predefined dark color or a predefined light color. As another example, the user may choose to remove the document background color or image. As a further example, the user may choose to display an outline or background around the text, such as white text on a black background or black text with a white outline. Other user defined or predefined methods for clarifying the text may also be used.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 depicts a pictorial representation of a network of data processing systems in which the present invention may be implemented;

Figure 2 is a block diagram of a data processing system that may be implemented as a server in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a block diagram illustrating a data processing system in which the present invention may be implemented;

Figures 4A-4C are example screens of display for a document viewer in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4D is an example screen of display for a preferences dialog in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figures 5A-5C illustrate example documents in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is an exemplary block diagram of a document viewing system with clarification in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

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Figure 7 is a block diagram of a browser program in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention; and

Figures 8 and 9 are flowcharts illustrating the operation of a document viewer in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference now to the figures, **Figure 1** depicts a pictorial representation of a network of data processing systems in which the present invention may be implemented.

5 Network data processing system **100** is a network of computers in which the present invention may be implemented. Network data processing system **100** contains a network **102**, which is the medium used to provide communications links between various devices and computers
10 connected together within network data processing system **100**. Network **102** may include connections, such as wire, wireless communication links, or fiber optic cables.

In the depicted example, server **104** is connected to network **102** along with storage unit **106**. In addition,
15 clients **108**, **110**, and **112** are connected to network **102**. These clients **108**, **110**, and **112** may be, for example, personal computers or network computers. In the depicted example, server **104** provides data, such as boot files, operating system images, and applications to clients
20 **108-112**. Clients **108**, **110**, and **112** are clients to server **104**. Network data processing system **100** may include additional servers, clients, and other devices not shown.

In the depicted example, network data processing system **100** is the Internet with network **102** representing a
25 worldwide collection of networks and gateways that use the TCP/IP suite of protocols to communicate with one another. At the heart of the Internet is a backbone of high-speed data communication lines between major nodes or host computers, consisting of thousands of commercial,
30 government, educational and other computer systems that

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route data and messages. Of course, network data processing system **100** also may be implemented as a number of different types of networks, such as for example, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), or a wide area network (WAN). **Figure 1** is intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the present invention.

Referring to **Figure 2**, a block diagram of a data processing system that may be implemented as a server, such as server **104** in **Figure 1**, is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Data processing system **200** may be a symmetric multiprocessor (SMP) system including a plurality of processors **202** and **204** connected to system bus **206**. Alternatively, a single processor system may be employed. Also connected to system bus **206** is memory controller/cache **208**, which provides an interface to local memory **209**. I/O bus bridge **210** is connected to system bus **206** and provides an interface to I/O bus **212**. Memory controller/cache **208** and I/O bus bridge **210** may be integrated as depicted.

Peripheral component interconnect (PCI) bus bridge **214** connected to I/O bus **212** provides an interface to PCI local bus **216**. A number of modems may be connected to PCI local bus **216**. Typical PCI bus implementations will support four PCI expansion slots or add-in connectors. Communications links to clients **108-112** in **Figure 1** may be provided through modem **218** and network adapter **220** connected to PCI local bus **216** through add-in boards.

Additional PCI bus bridges **222** and **224** provide interfaces for additional PCI local buses **226** and **228**, from which additional modems or network adapters may be

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supported. In this manner, data processing system **200** allows connections to multiple network computers. A memory-mapped graphics adapter **230** and hard disk **232** may also be connected to I/O bus **212** as depicted, either
5 directly or indirectly.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware depicted in **Figure 2** may vary. For example, other peripheral devices, such as optical disk drives and the like, also may be used in addition to or in
10 place of the hardware depicted. The depicted example is not meant to imply architectural limitations with respect to the present invention.

The data processing system depicted in **Figure 2** may be, for example, an IBM e-Server pSeries system, a
15 product of International Business Machines Corporation in Armonk, New York, running the Advanced Interactive Executive (AIX) operating system or LINUX operating system.

With reference now to **Figure 3**, a block diagram
20 illustrating a data processing system is depicted in which the present invention may be implemented. Data processing system **300** is an example of a client computer. Data processing system **300** employs a peripheral component interconnect (PCI) local bus architecture. Although the
25 depicted example employs a PCI bus, other bus architectures such as Accelerated Graphics Port (AGP) and Industry Standard Architecture (ISA) may be used. Processor **302** and main memory **304** are connected to PCI local bus **306** through PCI bridge **308**. PCI bridge **308** also
30 may include an integrated memory controller and cache memory for processor **302**. Additional connections to PCI local bus **306** may be made through direct component

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interconnection or through add-in boards. In the depicted example, local area network (LAN) adapter **310**, SCSI host bus adapter **312**, and expansion bus interface **314** are connected to PCI local bus **306** by direct component connection. In contrast, audio adapter **316**, graphics adapter **318**, and audio/video adapter **319** are connected to PCI local bus **306** by add-in boards inserted into expansion slots. Expansion bus interface **314** provides a connection for a keyboard and mouse adapter **320**, modem **322**, and additional memory **324**. Small computer system interface (SCSI) host bus adapter **312** provides a connection for hard disk drive **326**, tape drive **328**, and CD-ROM drive **330**. Typical PCI local bus implementations will support three or four PCI expansion slots or add-in connectors.

An operating system runs on processor **302** and is used to coordinate and provide control of various components within data processing system **300** in **Figure 3**. The operating system may be a commercially available operating system, such as Windows 2000, which is available from Microsoft Corporation. An object oriented programming system such as Java may run in conjunction with the operating system and provide calls to the operating system from Java programs or applications executing on data processing system **300**. "Java" is a trademark of Sun Microsystems, Inc. Instructions for the operating system, the object-oriented operating system, and applications or programs are located on storage devices, such as hard disk drive **326**, and may be loaded into main memory **304** for execution by processor **302**.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware in **Figure 3** may vary depending on the

implementation. Other internal hardware or peripheral devices, such as flash ROM (or equivalent nonvolatile memory) or optical disk drives and the like, may be used in addition to or in place of the hardware depicted in

- 5 **Figure 3.** Also, the processes of the present invention may be applied to a multiprocessor data processing system.

As another example, data processing system **300** may be a stand-alone system configured to be bootable without
10 relying on some type of network communication interface, whether or not data processing system **300** comprises some type of network communication interface. As a further example, data processing system **300** may be a personal digital assistant (PDA) device, which is configured with
15 ROM and/or flash ROM in order to provide non-volatile memory for storing operating system files and/or user-generated data.

The depicted example in **Figure 3** and above-described examples are not meant to imply architectural
20 limitations. For example, data processing system **300** also may be a notebook computer or hand held computer in addition to taking the form of a PDA. Data processing system **300** also may be a kiosk or a Web appliance.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the
25 present invention, data processing system **300** executes a document viewer. The document viewer is capable of displaying documents with background colors or images. The document viewer includes a clarification tool that modifies the attributes of the document to make the text
30 more visible. Thus, if the text is obscured by .

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background colors or images, the clarification tool may present the document with modified attributes to make the text more visible.

With reference to **Figures 4A-4C**, example screens of display for a document viewer are shown in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Particularly, with respect to **Figure 4A**, the screen comprises window **400**, including a title bar **402**, which may display the name of the application program. Title bar **402** also includes a control box **404**, which produces a drop-down menu (not shown) when selected with the mouse, and "minimize" **406**, "maximize" or "restore" **408**, and "close" **410** buttons. The "minimize" and "maximize" or "restore" buttons **406** and **408** determine the manner in which the program window is displayed. In this example, the "close" button **410** produces an "exit" command when selected. The drop-down menu produced by selecting control box **404** includes commands corresponding to "minimize," "maximize" or "restore," and "close" buttons, as well as "move" and "resize" commands.

Document viewer window **400** also includes a menu bar **412** and navigation toolbar **414**. Menus to be selected from menu bar **412** may include "File," "Edit," "View," "Insert," "Format," "Tools," "Window," and "Help." However, menu bar **412** may include fewer or more menus, as understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art. The navigation toolbar buttons include "Back", "Forward", "Stop", "Refresh", and "Home." More particularly, navigation toolbar **414** may include "Clarify" button **416**.

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A user may select the "Clarify" button to modify the attributes of the document to make the document text more visible.

5 The document viewer window also includes a display area **418** in which the document is presented. As can be seen in the example shown in **Figure 4A**, the document displayed in display area **418** includes a background image that obscures the text and, thus, makes the text difficult to read.

10 Turning to **Figure 4B**, document viewer window **450** includes display area **468** displaying the document with the clarification tool activated. The clarification tool may be activated or enabled by selecting and holding "Clarify" button **466** or may be toggled on and off by
15 selecting "Clarify" button **466**. Alternatively, the clarification tool may be enabled using menus in the menu bar or by selecting a menu item in a right-click menu, as known in the art.

In the example shown in **Figure 4B**, the clarification
20 tool clarifies the text by presenting light color text with a dark color background. Other methods for clarifying the text may be used, such as modifying the color of the text to a predetermined light color, removing the document background color or image, or
25 displaying an outline around the text.

For example, with reference to **Figure 4C**, document viewer window **470** includes display area **488** displaying the document with the clarification tool activated. In this example, the clarification tool clarifies the text
30 by removing the document background image.

With reference to **Figure 4D**, an example screen of display for a preferences dialog window is shown in

accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Preferences dialog window **490** includes display area **492** displaying preferences that may be selected or defined for operation of the document viewer.

5 For example, the user may select "Remove Background Color," "Remove Background Image," or "Enhance Fonts" in preferences dialog window **490**. Furthermore, if "Enhance Fonts" is selected, the user may select to outline the fonts. The user may also define a font color and a

10 background color to ensure that the text is displayed on a background with contrasting colors, thus making the text more readable.

Figures 5A-5C illustrate example documents in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Particularly, **Figure 5A** illustrates an

15 example HTML document as it is retrieved from storage or from a server. The BACKGROUND attribute in the BODY tag sets a background image as "background.gif." The background image may be the image shown in **Figure 4A**,

20 wherein default black text may be difficult to read with the designated background image. The BODY tag may also designate a color, text color, link color, etc. For example, the BODY tag may include a BGCOLOR attribute. Text may be difficult to read if text color is set too

25 close to the color of a background image or background color.

Figure 5B illustrates an example HTML document that is modified to remove the background image. The BACKGROUND attribute is removed from the BODY tag. The

30 resulting document may be similar to that shown in **Figure 4C**. In an alternative implementation, user preferences may be set to modify text color to make the text more

visible with respect to a background image or color. As shown in **Figure 5C**, the BODY tag is modified to include a TEXT attribute to designate a text color.

Figure 6 is an exemplary block diagram of a document viewing system with clarification in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Document viewing system **600** includes a controller **602**, a display interface **604**, a user interface **606**, a communications interface **608**, a document viewer **610**, and a clarification tool **612**. The elements **602-612** may be implemented as hardware, software, or a combination of hardware and software. In a preferred embodiment, the elements **602-612** are implemented as software instructions executed by one or more processors.

The elements **602-612** are coupled to one another via the control/data signal bus **620**. Although a bus architecture is shown in **Figure 6**, the present invention is not limited to such. Rather, any architecture that facilitates the communication of control/data signals between elements **602-612** may be used without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. The controller **602** controls the overall operation of the document viewer and orchestrates the operation of the other elements **604-612**.

With the operation of the present invention, document viewer **610** instructs controller **602** to display a document via display interface **604**. The user interacts with the document viewer via user interface **606**. Clarification tool **612**, when enabled, clarifies text in a displayed document so that the text is more visible. Document viewer **610** may retrieve documents from a remote

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location. For example, the document viewer may be a Web browser. Thus, document viewing system 600 may receive documents to display from communications interface 608.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, clarification tool 612 modifies attributes of a document presented by document viewer 610. The manner in which the document attributes are modified may be defined by the user using the user interface. The user may select a clarification preferences, such as text color and background color, text color and outline color, whether to remove the background image, etc. These parameters may be stored in preferences 614 and clarification tool 612 may use the preferences to determine the attributes for the displayed document.

The clarification tool may be a plugin for a Web browser application or other document viewing application. Clarification tool 612 may modify a document by creating an intermediate modified document. The modified document may exist in memory or may be cached so the document viewer does not need to have the attributes modified every time the document is displayed. For example, if the document viewer is a Web browser, clarification tool 612 may be a proxy server that modifies documents before they are passed to the Web browser. Thus, Web pages may be modified by the clarification tool and cached. When a user returns to a page by hitting the "Back" button, for example, the modified document may be displayed without retrieving the document again.

Turning next to **Figure 7**, a block diagram of a browser program is depicted in accordance with a

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preferred embodiment of the present invention. A browser is an application used to navigate or view information or data in a distributed database, such as the Internet or the World Wide Web.

5 In this example, browser **700** includes a user interface **702**, which is a graphical user interface (GUI) that allows the user to interface or communicate with browser **700**. This interface provides for selection of various functions through menus **704** and allows for
10 navigation through navigation **706**. For example, menu **704** may allow a user to perform various functions, such as saving a file, opening a new window, displaying a history, and entering a uniform resource locator (URL). Navigation **706** allows for a user to navigate various
15 pages and to select web sites for viewing. For example, navigation **706** may allow a user to see a previous page or a subsequent page relative to the present page. Preferences such as those illustrated in **Figure 7** may be set through preferences **708**. Graphical user interface
20 **702** also includes clarification tool **750** for modifying document attributes to make the document text more visible.

Communications **710** is the mechanism with which browser **700** receives documents and other resources from a
25 network such as the Internet. Further, communications **710** is used to send or upload documents and resources onto a network. In the depicted example, communication **710** uses HTTP. Other protocols may be used depending on the implementation. Documents that are received by
30 browser **700** are processed by language interpretation **712**, which includes an HTML unit **714** and a JavaScript unit

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716. Language interpretation 712 will process a document for presentation on graphical display 718. In particular, HTML statements are processed by HTML unit 714 for presentation while JavaScript statements are
5 processed by JavaScript unit 716.

Graphical display 718 includes layout unit 720, rendering unit 722, and window management 724. These units are involved in presenting web pages to a user based on results from language interpretation 712.

10 Browser 700 is presented as an example of a browser program in which the present invention may be embodied. Browser 700 is not meant to imply architectural limitations to the present invention. Presently available browsers may include additional functions not shown or
15 may omit functions shown in browser 700. A browser may be any application that is used to search for and display content on a distributed data processing system. Browser 700 may be implemented using known browser applications, such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer.
20 Netscape Navigator is available from Netscape Communications Corporation while Microsoft Internet Explorer is available from Microsoft Corporation.

With reference now to **Figures 8** and **9**, flowcharts illustrating the operation of a document viewer are shown
25 in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Particularly, with respect to **Figure 8**, the process begins and retrieves a document (step 802). Then, a determination is made as to whether clarify is enabled (step 804). If clarify is not enabled, the
30 process displays the document (step 806). If clarify is enabled, the process loads preferences (step 808) and

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modifies the document display based on the preferences (step **810**). Thereafter, the process proceeds to step **806** to display the document.

After the document is displayed, a determination is
5 made as to whether a new document is to be loaded (step **812**). If a new document is to be loaded, the process returns to step **802** to retrieve the document. If, however, a new document is not to be loaded in step **812**, a determination is made as to whether an exit condition
10 exists (step **814**). If an exit condition exists, the process ends. If an exit condition does not exist in step **814**, the process returns to step **812** to determine whether a new document is to be loaded.

Turning to **Figure 9**, an alternative process is
15 shown. The process begins, retrieves the document (step **902**), and displays the document (step **904**). A determination is made as to whether the clarification tool is activated (step **906**). If the user determines that the text of a document is not sufficiently visible,
20 the user activates the clarification tool and the process loads preferences (step **908**), modifies the document display based on the preferences (step **910**) and redisplay the document (step **912**). Next, a determination is made as to whether a new document is to
25 be loaded (step **914**).

If the clarification tool is not activated in step **906**, the process proceeds to step **914** to determine whether a new document is to be loaded. If a new document is to be loaded, the process returns to step **902**
30 to retrieve the document. If a new document is not to be loaded in step **914**, a determination is made as to whether

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an exit condition exists. If an exit condition does not exist, the process returns to step 906 to determine whether the clarification tool is activated. If an exit condition does exist in step 916, the process ends.

5 Thus, the present invention solves the disadvantages of the prior art by providing a convenient tool for clarifying documents that are designed or authored with text that is difficult to read. The clarification tool is capable of modifying document attributes so that text
10 is more visible. The clarification tool also allows the document display to be modified based upon user preferences, thus allowing the user to define a clarification method. In an alternative embodiment, the document may be encoded such that at least a portion of
15 the text is obscured by a background and the text cannot be read without the clarification tool. In this embodiment, the clarification tool may also authenticate the identity of a user before modifying the attributes of the document.

20 The clarification tool overrides explicitly specified attributes for components in a document. Therefore, even if the document is poorly designed and difficult to read, the clarification tool can modify the explicitly specified attributes for enhanced display.
25 Furthermore, the clarification tool of the present invention may be especially useful for users with visual impairment, such as color blindness. For example, while blue text on a green background might be readable to most users, a person with visual impairment may not be able to
30 read the text. As another example, a person with a visual impairment may have difficulty reading fine print in documents. The clarification tool of the present

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invention can be used to enhance the display of the fine print.

It is important to note that while the present invention has been described in the context of a fully functioning data processing system, those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the processes of the present invention are capable of being distributed in the form of a computer readable medium of instructions and a variety of forms and that the present invention applies equally regardless of the particular type of signal bearing media actually used to carry out the distribution. Examples of computer readable media include recordable-type media, such as a floppy disk, a hard disk drive, a RAM, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, and transmission-type media, such as digital and analog communications links, wired or wireless communications links using transmission forms, such as, for example, radio frequency and light wave transmissions. The computer readable media may take the form of coded formats that are decoded for actual use in a particular data processing system.

The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.